

## MAPPING MERCATOR

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I had finished my work for the day and had an idle afternoon ahead. So I said to my computer, "Darwin, let's play with 'MERCATOR' in a word way. Mercator was born about 500 years ago."

Darwin replied:

*Gerhard de Gemor [or 'de Kremer'], a.k.a Gerhardus Mercator? The one from Rupelmonde, Hapsburg County, Flanders, Holy Roman Empire; born March 5th 1512?*

"That's the one, Darwin. Would you scan the 'Names of Geographic Features'-fields of our copy of the GNIS database, please? How many word squares could you map 'MERCATOR' to?"

*I can map 'MERCATOR' to 764 word squares whose corresponding lines and columns of geographic names will repeat themselves.*

*I can map 'MERCATOR' to 23 word squares none of whose lines and columns of geographic names will repeat themselves.*

"Would you write out the first three and the final two squares? It'll be fun to celebrate the 500th anniversary-year of his birthday this way."

*Sure. Those are:*

M E R C A T O R	M E R C A T O R	M E R C A T O R
E a r a k o b a	E a r a k o b a	E b a s s o k o
R r e m u l l i	R r e m u l l i	R a j a a b a d
C a m a t l a n	C a m o t l a n	C s a k n e m a
A k u t u k p a	A k u t u k p a	A s a n g r a n
T o l l k r u g	T o l l k r u g	T o b e r b e g
O b l a p u r a	O b l a p u r a	O k a m a e r e
R a i n a g a r	R a i n a g a r	R o d a n g e n

M E R C A T O R	M E R C A T O R
A t a i k u l a	A t a r r a y a
T i n d a t o k	C a m a r a t a
R o s e b u s h	A m e n a b a r
A l a m a n i a	M a z a l i n a
M a r a n d r y	O y a n a n g a
A n a n d a u a	M e n i n g e r
T e n g a r a n	A n i o g a n e

"Thanks, Darwin. See you later."

*Lookim you behind, Walt.*